



1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The City of Freeport is celebrating its
3 sesquicentennial year in 2005; and

4 WHEREAS, On February 14, 1855, Freeport was incorporated as
5 a city; and

6 WHEREAS, Winnebago Indians had a village at the mouth of
7 Freeport's Spring Creek, along the river they called the
8 Pektannon (now called Pecatonica); the depot which once served
9 the Illinois Central Railroad marks the approximate spot of the
10 village; and

11 WHEREAS, "Tutty" Baker came upon the primitive Indian
12 village in the early 1830s and is credited with founding the
13 settlement that became the City of Freeport; Mr. Baker,
14 together with William Kirkpatrick and W.T. Galbraith, laid out
15 and began the building of Freeport; and

16 WHEREAS, In 1836, people began coming to Freeport, which
17 was at the time called Winneshiek after the chief of the
18 Winnebago Indians; Tutty was a great Freeport cheerleader, a
19 one-man Chamber of Commerce on the frontier, and he worked hard
20 to entice others to settle in Freeport; he operated a ferry
21 across the Pecatonica River and, where others charged a fee for
22 a ferrying service, he took them and their wagons across for
23 free as this was his chance to bring up all the good points
24 about Freeport; his wife is credited with naming the city; as
25 legend has it, she became frustrated with her husband's
26 generosity and told him their home should be known as a "free
27 port"; and

28 WHEREAS, In 1837, the State recognized Stephenson County,
29 naming it after the late Col. Benjamin Stephenson; in 1838,
30 Freeport saw many new residents and the completion of the

1 courthouse, a schoolhouse, and a hotel; and

2 WHEREAS, In 1840, Freeport's population was 491 and, until
3 1850, growth was slow; from 1848 to 1850, the county's
4 population had inched up from 10,000 to 11,666; the prairies
5 were dotted with thriving farms and some merchants were
6 multiplying; there were two newspapers prior to 1850, the
7 Prairie Democrat and the Freeport Journal; and

8 WHEREAS, Today, the City of Freeport has a highly diverse
9 collection of business and industry; the City is a center for
10 the insurance industry, with such well-known names as Metlife,
11 Kemper, and Royal & Sun Alliance; it is also a major industrial
12 center, with four Fortune 500 companies; the City's largest
13 employer is Honeywell's Micro Switch Division, which has
14 several plants in various locations within the city and county;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, Agriculture continues to contribute strongly to
17 the area's economy; more than 1,400 farms in Stephenson County
18 raise beef and dairy cattle and produce corn, soybean, hay,
19 oats, and other cash crops; the largest dairy producing county
20 in Illinois, Stephenson County has 23,000 dairy cows producing
21 346,344,000 pounds of milk annually; and

22 WHEREAS, To recognize Freeport's sesquicentennial, plans
23 are underway to have a Walk of Fame pinpointing Freeport's sons
24 and daughters who have achieved fame and fortune beyond the
25 city gates, Tutty's Crossing Trailhead and the Welcome Center
26 are reaching completion, a new play, "Tutty's Wake", has been
27 written, and the "History of Stephenson County" has been
28 reprinted; therefore, be it

29 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
30 NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
31 we recognize the City of Freeport's 150th anniversary and

1 applaud the efforts of those who are working to honor the
2 memory of the settlers who led the way and the men and women
3 who followed; we urge the residents of Freeport and the
4 surrounding towns to join in the celebration as Freeport's
5 history is remembered and relived during the many events that
6 are planned to recognize its unique history; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
8 presented to the City of Freeport as an expression of our
9 esteem.